

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01
/083 W

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R 100915Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8492

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA J

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 5293

E.O.1652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, ASEAN, ETR, MY

SUBJECT: ASEAN: PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN TERMS SUMMIT "SUCCESS"

1. MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN TOLD REPORTERS
AT AN EVENING PRESS CONFERENCE AUG. 8 THAT DESPITE LACK OF
"SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS" THE ASEAN SUMMIT WAS A SUCCESS.
"ASEAN HAS EMERGED MORE UNITED AND DETERMINED TO SHAPE HIS
OWN FUTURE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ITS PEOPLES." HE STATED. THE
PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT ASEAN REACHES AGREEMENT BY
CONSENSUS, CONSIDERING AND TRYING TO UNDERSTAND EACH MEMBER'S
PROBLEMS." WE WOULD PREFER TO ARGUE AND THRASH OUT EVERYTHING
IN DETAIL AND PERHAPS TAKE MORE TIME, RATHER THAN INTRODUCE
SOMETHING QUICKLY AND REGRET IT LATER," HE ADDED. SPECIFICALLY,
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ANY ASEAN ECONOMIC SCHEME MUST NOT ONLY BE CONSIDERED WITHIN
THE ASEAN CONTEXT BUT ALSO WITH PROPER REGARD TO ITS IMPACT
ON EACH MEMBER'S NATIONAL ECONOMY, THE PM CONTENTED, REFERRING
TO DISAPPOINTMENT "IN CERTAIN QUARTERS" THAT THE ASEAN PREFERENTIAL
TRADING ARRANGEMENT WAS NOT BROADENED TO 1,700 ITEMS AS SOME
ADVOCATED.

2. THE PM'S COMMENTS APPEAR TO BE THE GOM'S EXPLANATION FOR SIDING WITH INDONESIA IN NOT MOVING AS RAPIDLY AS THAILAND., THE PHILIPPINES AND PARTICULARLY SINGAPORE WANTED IN EXPANDING THE ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A COMPROMISE WITH THE OTHER ON THIS ISSUE THE GOM MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 9 THAT MALAYSIA WOULD PROPOSE AN ADDITIONAL 40 TO 50 ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE AGREEMENT DURING THE ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING IN THAILAND SEPT. 2-4.

3. COMMENT: WHILE GOM'S MOVE TO EXPAND THE PREFERENTIAL TRADING AGREEMENT BY A FEW ITEMS MAY BE VIEWED AS ONLY A TOKEN STEP IT DOES ILLUSTRATE THE FACT THAT IT WANTS TO APPEAR FORTHCOMING TO OTHER ASEAN MEMBERS AFTER SIDING WITH INDONESIA IN REJECTING THE SINGAPORE-INSPIRED LIST OF OVER 1,700 PROJECTS. THE MOVE ALSO ILLUSTRATES THAT THE GOM IS SERIOUS WHEN ITS SAYS THAT IT WOULD RATHER MOVE SLOWLY THAN JUST PLUNGE INTO SOMETHING WITHOUT STUDYING THE POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS.
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